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For Immediate Release...

Corrections News

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Family Orientation Meetings Successful

About a year-and-a-half after re-establishing Family Orientation Meetings, the Missouri Department of Corrections reports strong interest at the three male diagnostic centers across the state. A reported 2,473 family members representing 1,576 inmates participated in the meetings between January 2005 and June 2006 at Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (ERDCC) in Bonne Terre, Fulton Reception and Diagnostic Center (FRDC) and Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center (WRDCC) in St. Joseph.

In 2004, the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative Steering Committee identified areas that promote success for offenders upon release, including maintaining family and pro-social relationships during incarceration. The Committee recommended re-establishing the Family Orientation Meetings.

The meetings are held at least once a month at the diagnostic centers. A number of areas are covered – the diagnostic process, classification, transfers, release information, visitation, telephone access, education and work programs, access to medical and mental health care, access to money and personal property, religious and treatment programs, conduct rules and sanctions and avoiding possible victimization.

“We’ve seen a high improvement in customer service because of the Family Orientation Meetings. The number of phone calls and inquiries about Department practices has decreased significantly,” said Constituent Services Officer Lisa Jones.

The meetings last about an hour. After the meetings, immediate family members are allowed a visit with their loved one. Staff is able to answer the most commonly asked questions family members have about incarceration. The Department also offers the “For Family and Friends” guidebook on its web site.

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